

**UTILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
CITY HALL 8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33301  
NOVEMBER 29, 2011 – 6:30 P.M.**

Cumulative  
January 2011-  
December 2011

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Bunney Brenneman, Chair	P	6	0
Robert Cole, Vice Chair (dep. 7:34)	P	4	2
Maria Canady	A	3	3
L. Thomas Chancey	P	3	3
Deborah Frederick	A	3	1
Donald Lampasone (arr. 6:35)	P	2	2
Don Larson	P	6	0
Ruchel Louis (arr. 6:37-dep.8:17)	P	2	4
Terri Murru	A	1	5
Jay Weiss	P	5	1
Dennis West	A	2	3

**Staff**

Hal Barnes, Staff Liaison

Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Guests**

Rose Bechard-Butman, Horticultural Consultant

Todd Sagnella, Guest

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Brenneman called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was not yet present.

**III. Introduce New Members  
Self-Introductions**

The Committee members, Staff, and guests introduced themselves at this time.

Mr. Lampasone arrived at 6:35 p.m.

**IV. Administrative Re-vote on Minutes Required**  
**Minutes of February 22, 2011 Meeting**  
**Minutes of May 24, 2011 Meeting**  
**Minutes of June 28, 2011 Meeting**  
**Minutes of July 26, 2011 Meeting**

Mr. Barnes explained that at the February 22, 2011 meeting, Mr. Chancey and Mr. West had abstained from voting on whether or not the Committee would participate in the People and Planet Green Day event. Mr. Barnes had been subsequently advised that members may not abstain from voting, which meant the two members were required to vote on the issue.

Ms. Louis arrived at 6:37 p.m.

The February 22, 2011 **motion** was as follows: "**Motion** made by Ms. Louis, seconded by Mr. Weiss, that the UAC declines to participate in the City's People & Planet/Green Day because of not enough communication early on."

Chair Brenneman asked Mr. Chancey for his vote at this time. Mr. Chancey voted in favor of the **motion**.

Mr. Barnes stated that the above **motion** would remain an open item until such time as Mr. West was available to cast his vote as well.

Chair Brenneman continued that the minutes of the May 24, June 28, and July 26, 2011 meetings had not been approved, as a quorum had not been present.

**Motion** made by Mr. Larson, seconded by Mr. Weiss, to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2011 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Cole, seconded by Mr. Larson, to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2011 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

**Motion** made by Mr. Larson, seconded by Ms. Louis, to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2011 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Brenneman reported that the City Commission had lowered the quorum requirement for the Committee because several meetings had been held in which a quorum was not present. The previous requirement for a quorum would have required that 51% of the membership be present, including vacant positions. Because a total of 15 individuals could be appointed to the Committee, this would

mean eight members were required for a quorum; however, the current requirement for a quorum includes 51% of the currently appointed members, excluding vacant positions. This means the quorum requirement is presently six members.

Chair Brenneman continued that as each meeting's agenda and the previous meeting's minutes are sent to the members, each individual would be asked to confirm whether they can or cannot attend. She cautioned the Committee to avoid using the "reply all" option, as this would constitute a violation of the Sunshine Law. This would provide a count of the members who can attend.

Mr. Barnes advised that Staff, rather than the Chair, would need to contact the members to determine whether or not a quorum could be seated, as communication among members regarding Committee business would violate the Sunshine Law. Chair Brenneman asserted that this was common procedure on other City advisory bodies, and she wished to be able to determine in advance whether or not a quorum would be present at a meeting so unnecessary expenses would not be incurred. Mr. Barnes explained that he was simply looking out for the good of the Chair and Committee.

## **V. Continuing Business**

None.

## **VI. New Business**

### **A. History of Critical Tree Issues Including Whitefly**

Chair Brenneman explained that whiteflies are attacking trees and hedges in yards, swales, and medians throughout the City, and advised that Mr. Chancey had invited Rose Bechard-Butman, horticulturist and certified arborist, to discuss this issue with the Committee at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Chancey showed a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee, noting the social, historic, environmental, and economic benefits that trees provide to a community. He provided a brief history of tree preservation in Fort Lauderdale, including the effects of hurricanes, pests, and diseases on some native species, as well as issues such as "hat racking." The most recent problem to affect trees in the City is whitefly.

Ms. Bechard-Butman stated that spiraling whitefly was first seen in Miami-Dade County on native gumbo-limbo trees. She explained that this is not the same whitefly that attacks ficus trees, but is a new variety in Florida that attacks a wide host of trees and plants. It sucks nutrients from the leaves of trees, causing wilting, stunting, leaf drop, and possibly death. This particular form of whitefly is

large compared to the ficus whitefly, and has been seen on several species, including live oaks and mangoes. It has even been found on aquatic plants in Palm Beach County.

She advised that spiraling whiteflies are so named because they lay eggs in a distinctive spiral pattern on the underside of a leaf. A by-product of spiraling whitefly is sooty mold, which is excreted onto the leaves. When the whiteflies hatch from eggs, they began feeding on the sap inside leaves, then molting. Once they reach adulthood they fly to new plants.

Ms. Bechard-Butman stated that whiteflies do not have a hibernation period, although cold winters will reduce their numbers. They have a 20-27 day life cycle; eggs hatch within eight days of being deposited.

She concluded that when new pests are found in Florida, there is usually a heavy infestation at first. She encouraged caution with regard to using insecticides, as these can sometimes rid the pests of their natural predators as well. Ms. Bechard-Butman advised that spiraling whiteflies can be washed from small plants with a strong stream of water, to be followed with treatment by insecticidal soap or horticultural oils once a week for three to four weeks. This provides the best control with the least amount of potential environmental damage.

For larger plants and trees with heavy infestations, she continued that a strong stream of water can also be used to treat whiteflies. If other chemicals are used, she recommended applying them to the soil as a drench, as this will carry the chemical through the plant's vascular system and poison the whiteflies. She cautioned once more against using insecticides as the first course of action, however, as whiteflies are very quick to develop a resistance to chemicals.

Some of the natural enemies of whiteflies are parasitic wasps, ladybugs and lady beetles, and lacewings; however, if a broad-spectrum insecticide is used on whiteflies, this defeats the natural balance, as it also kills the predators and parasites that prey on pests. She reiterated that spiraling whiteflies less problematic than ficus whiteflies, which can defoliate an entire plant. Keeping trees well-watered and fertilized provides some defense against the damage that spiraling whiteflies can cause.

Ms. Bechard-Butman concluded that there are some insecticides labeled for use on whiteflies in Florida. Natural botanical substances, such as neem oil, can also be used as a broad-spectrum spray. She recommended that the first course of action should attempt to protect the natural balance. Mr. Chancey distributed information on whiteflies and some of the substances used to fight them to the Committee members.

Mr. Barnes advised that the PowerPoint presentation would be converted to a pdf file and distributed via email to the Committee.

Mr. Lampasone stated that he had experienced problems with a contractor that did not prune trees properly, despite his attempts to educate them about the appropriate manner for pruning. Mr. Chancey asserted that there are ways to reduce trees more effectively, and advised if homeowners take care of their own trees, the contractor would not need to get involved.

Vice Chair Cole left the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Mr. Lampasone observed that a contractor should be subject to governance and oversight, and asked how it was possible they could continue pruning trees improperly. Mr. Chancey explained that their job is to keep power lines clear of trees for Florida Power & Light (FPL), and use a methodology to do so that is inappropriate for the kinds of trees found in tropical climates.

**Motion** made by Mr. Lampasone that the Committee ask the City Commission to create a code stipulation for any licensed tree trimmer, whether it be FPL or whether it be Asplundh or anybody, to delegate from somebody like [Mr. Chancey] into the code how these things are going to start getting done.

He explained that if the proper way to reduce trees is codified and subject to oversight by a City Department, such as the Building Department, the inappropriate methods used by contractors in the past would be subject to fines.

Mr. Chancey stated that this Code already exists, and pointed out that the issue is the education of contractors on how to accommodate line clearance. Mr. Lampasone said he would like to include a reference to this education in his **motion**, such as requiring continuing education for contractors licensed to trim trees.

Chair Brenneman explained that FPL prunes trees to a specific standard, which requires that they be cut back for the maximum number of years. She recommended that this issue be addressed through the Tree Subcommittee, which could draft information on appropriate pruning of trees and submit it to the City Commission.

Mr. Chancey advised that the problem lies with the contractors rather than with FPL, as the contractors are not educated on the appropriate procedure for clearing tropical trees. He suggested that a possible course of action might be for an entire neighborhood to work with a contractor and advise them on how to appropriately prune the trees within that neighborhood.

Chair Brenneman noted that the Committee receives a quarterly report from FPL, identifying the neighborhoods their line clearance contractors will visit within that quarter; however, she stated the report has not been helpful thus far. Mr. Chancey said this was because the contractor(s) did not show up when they were expected.

Mr. Lampasone **withdrew** his **motion**.

Mr. Larson pointed out that City licensing divisions could require that a contractor's foremen be trained in appropriate pruning techniques. FPL could also inform contractors that they must adhere to specific standards, as a contractor would not necessarily be familiar with the standard required of certified arborists. This would require that a company's foremen are properly trained.

Ms. Bechard-Butman proposed that the homeowners' association in a particular neighborhood could meet with the foreman of the line clearance team before pruning is done. Mr. Lampasone added that the neighborhood could make plans to meet with FPL; if no one can do so from the neighborhood, a member of the City's landscaping department could meet with FPL instead.

Chair Brenneman asserted that the Committee may make recommendations to the City Commission, although she noted that there is no way for them to enforce these recommendations. She stated that she was willing to convene the Tree Subcommittee to discuss the issue further.

Mr. Larson agreed that a meeting of the Tree Subcommittee would be the best way to proceed. Chair Brenneman asked any interested members to sign up for this Subcommittee, and advised that Mr. Barnes would send them a notification of when the meeting would be held.

Chair Brenneman thanked Mr. Chancey and Ms. Bechard-Butman for their presentation.

## **B. Remote Attendance**

Chair Brenneman stated this Item would be rescheduled for discussion at the next meeting. Mr. Barnes agreed, noting that he would like an Assistant City Attorney to be present for this discussion.

## **C. Other New Business**

Mr. Larson requested that an update on windmills and wind turbines in the City be provided at the next meeting.

Mr. Lampasone asked that a member of the Water Department be invited to attend an upcoming meeting. Chair Brenneman noted that while the Committee has no jurisdiction over this Department, they have been willing to send representatives in the past when requested.

Chair Brenneman noted that she would like a member of the Public Service Commission to be invited to a future meeting. She explained that she would like to know if their mandate includes references to ANSI 300 or line clearance standards.

Ms. Louis left the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Todd Sagnella, guest, suggested that line clearance could be discussed directly with FPL so they would be aware of the problems with their contractors. It was noted that FPL normally sends a representative to attend UAC meetings.

## **VII. Good of the Committee**

### **A. Attendance Policy for Advisory Boards & Committees**

Mr. Barnes explained if a member misses three consecutive meetings or four total meetings during his or her term, he or she would be subject to removal from the Committee. Members who have been removed are sent a letter from Staff advising them that they have the option of requesting re-appointment.

## **VIII. Communications to the City Commission**

None.

## **IX. Announcements**

**Tuesday, January 24, 2012, Next Regular UAC Meeting, 6:30 p.m.**

It was determined by consensus that the Committee would not meet in December 2011. No meeting would be planned for December 2012.

## **X. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]